

October 25, 2014

NOACH

After all of the raining and storming, Noah and his family and all of the animals floated across the surface of the water for weeks and months until, the Torah says, "HaShem remembered Noah and every living thing, and all the beasts that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided." It would seem that this verse implies that HaShem had somehow forgotten Noah just as an absent minded professor might forget where he put his glasses or maybe He was in the early stages of Alzheimer's Disease. But, we are told, HaShem knows all things, so I guess this implication is not valid. Besides, if we look a bit deeper, we remember that all of mankind was under judgment, but that Noah, alone, was blameless in his generation. HaShem took the time and effort to alert Noah to the impending flood, so that he and his family and the animals might escape death and be saved, so, of course, The Lord had not really forgotten Noah. We see by His actions that there are at least two sides of HaShem. First He was exercising the virtue of judgment. He created everything perfectly, but the people had turned to their own ways and the earth was corrupted. He had not only the authority, but also the means to destroy everything. Secondly, HaShem was exercising the virtue of mercy because, although Noah was a virtuous man, his children and wife may not have been quite so virtuous. We don't know. Scripture is silent on this point. Nevertheless, HaShem, in His mercy, saved them also.

Another part of the opening statement is that HaShem remembered not only Noah, but also every living thing and all the beasts. Holy cow! God remembers cows, too. We are told much later in Psalm 145 that "The Lord is good to all and God's tender mercies are over all." I believe "all" would include cows, and maybe even horses.

Because of our human limitations, we do not see as God sees. God's vision does not focus on status, or wealth, or good looks, but on acts of mercy, kindness, justice, and care. In this respect, we are HaShem's hands and feet. We are told that in the beginning that we are created in God's image. If HaShem has the virtue of mercy, should we not also have this virtue? We are told in the writing of James, that we are to be doers of the word and not merely hearers. If you want HaShem's attention and you want to be remembered by Him, reach out to the sick, the hungry, and the homeless. By caring for each other, for humanity, and for all of God's creatures, we make ourselves worthy of God's attention. By our actions, we give substance and form to the claim that we are created in the image of HaShem, and that HaShem is, after all, merciful.

Focus: HaShem's agents

Hebrew: Genesis 8:1-2

English: Genesis 7:23 - 8:5

Haftarah: Isaiah 66:1-2

B'rit Chadasha: Matthew 24:37-44